

Candida – The Invisible Enemy in Allergy

Candida is a yeast infection that plays an important role in autoimmune and chronic immune disorders, and also in allergies. Yeasts are single-celled organisms, and different forms of yeast normally exist in our bodies on the *outside* of mucous membranes. Of the different forms of Candida, the yeast most commonly associated with allergy is *Candida albicans*. Normally, it lives in the colon and mouth with other organisms, without causing harm.

However, if the body is weakened, or the delicate balance between harmful and beneficial microbes is somehow changed (perhaps by chemicals or certain foods), Candida populations can quickly grow out of control.

How Allergy Can Make You More Yeasty

The health of your digestive system and your immune system relies in part on the presence of hundreds of kinds of beneficial bacteria (called **microflora**) in your gut. These are the good guys, and a healthy gut contains trillions of them. They help keep you healthy. Microflora suppress allergic reactions by the immune system, reduce inflammation in the gut, and bolster the immune system's ability to respond to infection. They are also essential for keeping potentially harmful microbes in the body (parasites, bacteria, viruses, and yeasts such as Candida) in check.

If your immune system is weakened by illness, poor diet, or repeated allergic reactions, the harmful microbes can quickly proliferate. As their population explodes, they overwhelm and destroy the beneficial microflora, leaving the digestive and related tracts without their protection. Or your microflora can be wiped out by antibiotics, again allowing the bad guys to take over. Unfortunately, researchers have noted a significant increase in infestations of harmful bacteria such as Candida as our modern diet and over-use of antibiotics upset the natural balance of microflora and potentially harmful microbes.

So Many Signs Make Diagnosis Tricky



If you always feel tired, or have persistent rashes in the moist, warm parts of your body, or just feel low all the time, chances are you have Candida. Candida can show up as a whole host of apparently unrelated symptoms, including inflammation, 'furry' or white-coated tongue, scratching, dizziness, rashes, headaches, asthma, eczema, general lethargy, sugar cravings, fatigue, PMS light-headedness, inability to concentrate, 'foggy' brain, bloating, liver problems, muscle aches, depression, chemical and food sensitivities, food cravings (particularly for sugary foods), menstrual cramps and problems, sexual problems, depression, frequent bladder infections, insomnia, liver problems, irritable bowel, and stronger allergic reactions...and that's just the start.

Babies, especially those with food allergies, often have Candida overgrowth in the diaper area, resulting in an aggressive 'diaper rash'. Allergy to cow's milk is the

most common cause. Many babies develop 'thrush', a form of Candida that develops in the mouth.

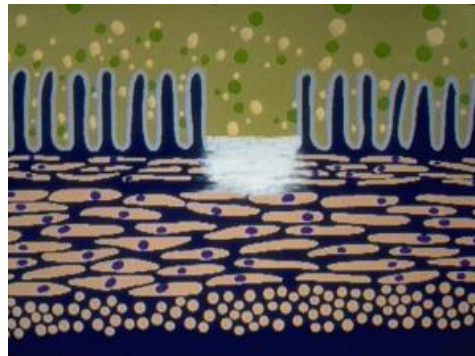
Experience shows that the severity and extent of the symptoms is not necessarily reflect the level of Candida overgrowth. You can have mild symptoms or just not feel quite well yet have high levels of Candida, or you can experience quite strong symptoms but have a rather low level of Candida. Some people who experience no obvious symptoms at all have high levels of the yeast.

To make things worse, yeast can link with viruses or other pathogens, resulting in additional disorders such as chronic fatigue syndrome. In this way, Candida can go unrecognised for a long time as the doctor treats the other disease. Also, a person who is allergic to yeast can have allergic reactions to the Candida without knowing it. The person might carefully eliminate yeast from their diet, yet continue to experience symptoms of allergy, and these will only become worse as the person eats more of the sugary, fatty foods that Candida thrives on. Repeated allergic reactions to the yeast weaken the immune system, which can no longer combat viruses and other pathogens.

What Harm Can A Little One-Celled Yeast Do?

By itself, not much, but trillions of them can cause a great deal of harm. As with all infections, Candida infection) creates biochemical and pH changes in the body that create more favourable conditions for pathogens (bacteria, parasites, virus and fungus), making it very difficult for the microflora to recover.

Uncontrolled by the microflora, Candida can mutate into a more resistant form, developing threadlike structures that burrow under the mucous membranes of the intestines and get into the blood stream. When this continues to happen, it can cause the gut lining to become irritated and inflamed, and small gaps to occur in the lining. This is a condition called 'leaky gut', and it is a major cause of allergies.



Inflammation in the gut

Whole Body Sickness

Once Candida can easily get into the blood and spread to other parts of the body, its effects can spread to all parts of the body. Candida produces and releases over 80 known toxins in the body which puts even more stress on the immune system as it struggles to destroy or neutralize the Candida and toxic products. If not treated, Candida will spread and attack more and more tissues, causing disease and triggering allergic reactions.

Because Candida can affect the whole body, you can easily confuse its effects with other problems, which might explain why so many cases of Candida are not diagnosed or treated until they have caused other problems. Candida can appear as a rash on your face, or as inflammation of the lungs even though the Candida infestation is centred in your gut. It can also link with other pathogens such as viruses, which greatly increases its ability to do harm.

Some of the effects of Candida are:

Allergies – Overgrowth of this yeast can weaken your immune system so that you develop sensitivities or allergies to some foods and chemicals. Also, you can develop an allergy to yeasts. In that case, even if you clear away the infection, you will experience allergic reactions to foods containing yeast that are similar to the symptoms of Candida.

Nutrient deficiencies – Since Candida interferes with digestion, absorption of nutrients, and waste elimination, it can lead to a deficiency of nutrients. This can compound the problem of nutrient deficiency that is often associated with allergies.

Worsening of existing allergies –Candida disrupts the microflora in the gut, which contributes to the development of allergic airway disease such as asthma. Allergic individuals have smaller populations of microflora, and higher numbers of pathogens. This makes it harder for the immune system to deal with pathogens in future. A person with allergies will be even more vulnerable to disease. Also, a weakened immune system increases the risk of new allergies forming, or of existing allergies spread and becoming more serious.

In addition, Dr. L.M. McEwen of London reports that Candida can also contribute to dysventilation, where the breath is shallow and rapid. This kind of breathing not only deprives the body of oxygen; it is also associated with the presence of excess lactic acid in the brain, and it also encourages the release of histamines, both of which increase the severity of allergic reactions.

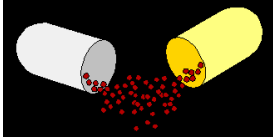
Other conditions such as autism and chronic fatigue - Candida appears to interfere with the production of hormones and the transmission of messages from nerves. Your hormones and nerves pass on essential messages between all parts of the body. If these messages are interfered with, different parts of the body will not function properly. Imagine a large construction site where messengers between the designers, workers, managers pass on faulty information. You'd end up with a building full of dangerous problems. Likewise, incorrect messages within the body will result in various healthy problems.

Researchers Shaw et al (1995) also found a link between Candida and autism. They found of high levels of tartaric acid in the urine of many children with autism. Tartaric acid inhibits certain enzymes that are used to produce energy, especially in mitochondria, the energy power of cells. High levels of this acid are also found in those with chronic fatigue syndrome. Tartaric acid is a by-product of Candida.

Immune-deficiency disease – If you have spent time in hospital, you may have come down with an infestation of Candida. It flourishes and quickly spreads in people whose immune system is already weakened by illness, and is very common in hospitalized patients, especially if they are treated with antibiotics or steroids. Candida infestation can be toxic. The yeast affects all parts of the body, even if the infestation is centred mostly in the gut or mouth. It is this whole-body effect of Candida that puts ill people and premature infants in grave danger of developing serious immune deficiency diseases as the overwhelmed immune system collapses.

What Medicines and Donuts Have In Common

Both can cause the overgrowth of Candida. Candida is caused by:



Antibiotics - The overuse of antibiotics destroys the beneficial microflora that normally keep Candida in check.

Other medicines - Hormone replacements, birth control pills, and steroids such as cortisone drugs and prednisone also encourage the growth of Candida.

Simple carbohydrates - If your diet is high in simple carbohydrates (cakes, white bread and sugar), you are feeding the Candida yeast in your body. Without these foods, the yeast will starve. That's why a person with Candida often craves sweet, fatty foods.

Direct transmission - Candida can be passed from an infected mother to the baby in the uterus, as it can cross the placental barrier. Or the baby can be infected during the passage through the birth canal of an infected mother. The yeast can also be transmitted through sexual activity and from skin to skin.

Getting Rid of Candida

Since medicines often have unfortunate side effects (aren't they the number one cause of Candida?), you might be reluctant to take conventional medicines to treat Candida, and rightly so. There are many excellent homeopathic, herbal, and other natural alternatives. Your health practitioner will probably prescribe some kind of bug-busting remedy to help you get rid of the yeast, but it won't work unless you stop feeding it sugar, white flour, and foods high in fungus, molds and yeast. Therefore, a Candida-busting diet is essential. Stick to the diet and avoid anti-biotics and steroids, and you are on your way to feeling like a new person.